

WAHDATUL WUJUD AND ITS INFLUENCE TOWARD CONCEPT OF ISLAMIC TAUHID ACCORDING TO IBN ARABI

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The name of Ibn Arabi has always been associated with the doctrine of *wahdatul wujud*. Wahdatul Wujud the "Unity of Being" is a Sufi philosophy emphasizing that 'there is no true existence except the Ultimate Truth (God). Or in other phrasing that the only truth within the universe is God, and that all things exist within God only. Although the phrase refers to a subjective state or direct, inward experience attained by Sufis, it has also been understood and discussed as a philosophical concept and, as such, interpreted in different ways all of his creations emerge from *'adim* (non-existence) to *wujud* (existence) out of his thought only. Hence the existence of God is the only truth (*Haqq*), and the concept of a separate created universe is falsehood (*Batil*). This doctrine has played metaphysic role in his life, both his life and his teaching point that *the Principle of the Truth and the Way to the Truth* are esoteric.¹

After his death in 1240, Ibn 'Arabi's writings (and teachings) quickly spread throughout the Islamic world have been the subject of numerous commentaries in many languages. His teaching on wahdatul wujud is the mostly discussed and debated among scholars. He has more influence on the way Muslims have thought about God. Even though he has no any particular tariqa, but his teaching on wahdatul wujud has influenced many Sufis and philosopher after Ibn Rusyd, and he is the next important figure after Al-Ghazali. His teaching could be best categorized as *tasawwuf falasafi*. And he is known as 'the greatest sheikh' or *al-sheikh al-Akbar*.

WHO IS IBN 'ARABI?

Mystic, philosopher, poet, sage, Muhammad b. 'Ali Ibn Arabi is one of the world's great spiritual teachers. Known as Muhyiddin (the Revivified of Religion) and the Sheikh al-Akbar (the Greatest Master), he was born in 1165 AD into the Moorish culture of Andalusian Spain, the center of an extraordinary flourishing and cross-fertilization of Jewish, Christian and Islamic thought, through which the major scientific and philosophical works of antiquity were transmitted to Northern Europe. Ibn Arabi's spiritual attainments were evident from an early age, and he was renowned for his great visionary capacity. He travelled extensively in the Islamic world and died in Damascus in 1240 AD.²

He wrote some 400 works His major contribution was in the field of *tasawwuf*. Of his 20 main Sufi works, the most important two are: 1. *al-Futuhāt al-Makkiyya fī asrār al-Malikiyya wal-'l-mulkiyya* (The Meccan revelations). The autograph text in 37 volumes is preserved in Istanbul. 2. *Fusus al-Hikam wa khusus al-kilam* (The Bezels of Wisdom). These two collections constitute the standard Sufi encyclopedia on mystical doctrine. In his *Diwān* and *Tarjumān al-Ashwāq*, he also wrote some of the finest poetry in the Arabic language. These extensive writings provide a beautiful exposition of the Unity of Being³

HIS DISCIPLES

Ibn Arabi is most often characterized in Islamic texts as the originator of the doctrine of wahdatul wujud, however, this expression is not found in his works. According to Chittick, this term was firstly introduced by Shadriddin al-Qunawi (d. 637 H/1274 M) and mostly repeated by Ibn Sab'in (d. 646 H/1248 M) and Afifuddin at-Tilimsani (d. 690 H/1291). Although he frequently makes statements that approximate it, it cannot be claimed that "Oneness of Being" is a sufficient description of his ontology, since he affirms the "manyness of reality" with equal vigor.⁴

Ibn Arabi's ideas have been disseminated via commentaries on his work and by his disciples such as Sadr al-Din al-Qunawi (d. 1274).⁵ His doctrines were taken up in Persia by the great Sufis Abd al-Karim al-Jili (d. 1417), the Imam Shadhili, and Jalal ad-

¹ Esposito, John. (Ed.) *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Vol. 2, in *Wahdatul Wujud: a fundamental doctrine in Sufism*. Retrieved from <http://sunnipath.org>, internet on 18 December 2009.

² After twenty years travelling-visiting some places, such as Jerusalem, Baghdad, Konya, and Aleppo, Ibn Arabi then had decided to stay in Damascus in 1223. He passed away on 10 November 1240, (22 Rabi'u l-Tsani, 630 H), when he was 76 years. Retrieved from http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Arabi, on 18 December 2009.

³ Esposito, John. (Ed.) *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Vol. 2, p. 160 in *Wahdat al-Wujud: a fundamental doctrine in Sufism*. Retrieved from <http://sunnipath.org>, internet on 18 December 2009.

⁴ William Chittick. *Imaginal worlds*. 1994

⁵ Shadriddin Muhammad Qunawi is the special student of Ibn Arabi. He is the step son of Ibn Arabi who has dedicated in disseminating and mediating the thought of Ibn Arabi.

Shadriddin Muhammad bin Ishaq bin Yusuf bin Ali Qunawi, born in Qunniyah Malatiyyah, Anatolia in 606 / 607 H and passed away in Qunniyah in 673 H. Qunawi had been known as the great sheikh who master both the zahir and bathin knowledge in Fiqh, tariqa and haqiqa. He is also considered as a holy person. Qunawi's mother was married by Ibn Arabi. Hence he was under the guardian and the education of Ibn Arabi.

Qunawi has been well known as a great commentator of Ibn Arabi's works, particularly which relates to *Wahdatul Wujud*. For this he wrote a book, title *Nafakhat al-Ilahiyyah*. Some of the great students of Sheikh Qunawi in Sufism are Sheikh Mu'ayyid al-Jandi the major commentator of *Fusus al-Hikam* of Ibn Arabi :

Din Rumi.⁶ Through them his teachings extended to all parts of Islam. And through Muhammad ibn Fadl Allah al-Burhanpûrî (d. 1029),⁷ the teaching of Ibn Arabi widely extended to the South Asia. In Nusantara the Ibn Arabi's teaching has been introduced and analyzed by Sufi scholar, such as: Hamzah Fansuri, Shamsuddin al-Sumatrani, 'Abd al-Shamad al-Palimbani, Dawûd al-Fathânî, Muhammad Nafîs al-Banjârî, and others.⁸ And today, some Sufi Orders, notably the Bektashi sect and the non-traditional sects of Universal Sufism, place much emphasis on the concept of *wahdatul wujud*.⁹

WAHDATUL WUJUD AND ITS RELATION WITH THE CONCEPT OF ISLAMIC TAUHID

Tashbih (the declaration of similarity) and Tanzih (the declaration of incomparability)

The contents of Islamic faith, roughly speaking, become the specialty of Kalam, Sufism, and Philosophy groups of scholars.¹⁰ While the kalam specialists focused on God and His attributes, the philosophers focused on reality itself. And in practical, every form in which Islamic philosophy developed, tawhid was an underlying theme.

Ihsan is to do what is beautiful is to worship God as if you see Him, because if you do not see Him, He sees you. The attitude demanded by ihsan may be dominated by tanzih or by tashbih, or it may combine the two qualities in equal measure. Here Ibn Arabi explains that this is only a manner of speaking. In fact those characters are all latent within human beings because of the divine form, but they belong to God, and as long as people remain heedless of their own nature, the divine qualities within them will not become manifest in proper harmony and balance.¹¹

Theoretical Sufism offers a vision of tawhid based on unveiling, firmly grounded in the Qur'anic revelation, and in many of its manifestation, respectful toward, though not enthusiastic about, rational investigation. And Ibn Arabi considered that Sufism is to assume God's character traits as one's own (*takhalluq bi akhlaq Allah*). The doctrine of *Wahdatul Wujud* asserts that everything that exists can only exist because it is an aspect of Divine Reality, hence an aspect of Divine Unity itself. However, Sufi scholars assert that although *Wahdatul Wujud* may be interpreted that Sufism see the face of God everywhere, it does not mean that it has reduced God to everything. God remains supremely transcendent, even though everything which arises and exists resembles him (*tashbih*). He resembles nothing but himself (*tanzih*).¹²

Those who uphold the teaching of *wahdatul wujud* distinguish three modes of *tawhid*:¹³

1. *Tawhid al-af'al* (oneness or unity of the Agent): Meaning that, of every act, the sole and only, the absolute, Agent is God. It follows from this view that there is no need to look for any cause for whatever exists or happens in the universe; everything everywhere is directly the work of God. (Since we dealt with the issue of *kasb* (the performance or doing of acts) and *khalq* (the createdness of acts), matters pertaining to *kalam*, in the questions related to destiny. Those who argue for *tawhid al-af'al* cite the following verses to support their view:

But God has created you and what you do. (Saffat 37:96) . . . All is from God . . . (Nisa 4:78)

2. *Tawhid al-sifat* (oneness or unity of the Subject): Meaning that of all predicates the sole and only Subject is God. According to this view, all volition, all forces and powers, all knowledge and faculties, belong to God only; they are an intelligible expression, or a work, or a realized state of Him.

3. *Tawhid al-dhat* (also, *tawhid al-wujud*) (oneness or unity of Essence or of Being): Meaning that in essence all existence is One; and everything visible or knowable around us, other than Him, is a manifestation and disclosure of Him in certain states.

Given that such a view of *tawhid*, as noted above, is the result of an inward state or direct, inward experience (*dhawq*), many scholars do not consider the subject amenable to rational discussion. In fact, when existents and events are not referred ultimately to God and His Names, it is impossible to explain them fully. That is acknowledged by all people of sound learning who reflect seriously and pursue their reflections fully. There is considerable similarity between the understanding of *tawhid* of those who use rational methods of inquiry, and those who follow the disciplines of Sufism.

Miftah al-Ghaib al-Jam' wa al-Wujud.

Retrieved from http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shadrudin_Al-Qunawi, on 18 December 2009.

⁶ Some of his students are: Shadr al-Dîn al-Qunawi (d. 763/1274), Mu'yid al-Dîn al-Jandi (d. 690/1291), 'Abd al-Razzâq al-Q(K)âsyânî (d. 730/1330), Syaraf al-Dîn Dawûd al-Qaysharî (d. 751/ 1350), Sayyid Haydar Amulî (d. setelah 787/1385), 'Abd al-Karîm al-Jilî (d. 826/1421), 'Abd al-Rahmân al-Jâmî (d. 898/1492), 'Abd al-Wahhâb al-Sya'rânî (d. 973/1565), 'Abd al-Ghanî al-Nâbulusî (d. 1114/1731).

⁷ Esposito, John. (Ed.) *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Vol. 2, in *Wahdat al-Wujud: a fundamental doctrine in Sufism*. Retrieved from <http://sunnipath.org>, internet on 18 December 2009.

⁸ Atjeng Ahmad Kusaeri in Hamzah Fansuri. *Ensiklopedia Islam*. V. 3. Jakarta: Ihtiar Baru-Van Hoeve. 1993. P. 66-68.

⁹ Retrieved from http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pemahaman_Sufisme_Ibn_Arabi, on 18 December 2009.

¹⁰ Murata and Chittick. *The vision of Islam*. Suhail Academy: Lahore.1994. P. 236.

¹¹ Ibid P. 267.

¹² See Murata and Chittick. *The vision of Islam*. Suhail Academy: Lahore.1994.

¹³ The seven dignities (martabat tujuh) is a concept that has been applied and developed by the sufis, followers of Ibn Arabi in understanding tawhid, God, and creation.

Reasons understand tanzih, and without tanzih there can be no Islam and no servant, and hence there can be no tashbih and no vicegerent. But imagination allows for the realization of tashbih. Excessive stress upon tashbih leads people to serve many objects and concern or to serve their own egos in place of God. In either case this is shirk, the loss of tawhid. The net result of focusing too much on tashbih is practically the same as paying exclusive attention to tanzih.

Moreover, the major issue that immerses in the tasawwuf falasafi discourse is *wahdatul wujud* or *wujudiyah*. This doctrine centered on the teaching of universe and human being creation through the God appearance in seven dignities (martabat). This concept, later, known as the theory of seven dignities that consist of *ahadiyah*, *wahdah*, *wahidiyah*, *alam mitsal*, *alam arwah*, *alam ajsam*, and *insan kamil*.¹⁴

Ahadiyah is the haqiqa of Allah; the dignity of Dhat Allah and wahdah are called Haqiqa Muhammadiyah or the attributes of Allah; wahidiyah is the haqiqa of insan: Adam `alaih al- Salam and all human being or asma Allah; alam arwah is the haqiqa of all souls; alam mitsal is the haqiqa of all shapes; alam ajsam is the haqiqa of all body; and insan is the haqiqa of all human being. Whereas, martabat ahadiyah, wahdah and wahidiyah are *anniyyat* Allah, alam arwah, alam mitsal, alam ajsam and alam insan are martabat *anniyyat* al-makhluk.¹⁵

THE CRITICS TOWARD IBN `ARABI

Among the scholars condemning Ibn `Arabi as an innovator or even an outright heretic (*zindiq*) and disbeliever because of *Fusus al-Hikam*: Ibn `Abd al-Salam, al-Jazari, Sharaf al-Din ibn al-Muqri, Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi, Sa'd al-Din al-Taftazani, Jamal al-Din Muhammad ibn Nur al-Din, Siraj al-Din al-Bulqini who supposedly ordered his books burnt, Burhan al-Din al-Biq'a'i, Ibn Taymiyya, and his student al-Dhahabi.

The Hanafi shaykh `Ala' al-Din al-Bukhari, like Ibn al-Muqri, went so far as to declare anyone who did not declare Ibn `Arabi a disbeliever to be himself a disbeliever. This is the same `Ala' al-Din al-Bukhari who said that anyone that gives Ibn Taymiyya the title Sheikh al-Islam is a disbeliever. And some other scholars label him as liberalist and pluralist.¹⁶

Ibn Taymiyya attacked the idea of emanation not only in its philosophical but also in its mystical context, as adopted by the Sufis. He felt that the beliefs and practices of the Sufis were far more dangerous than were the ideas of the philosophers. The latter were a small elite group that had little direct effect on the masses. The Sufis, however, were widespread and had a large popular following. However, Ibn Taymiyya saw a link between the ideas of the philosophers and those of the Sufis, even though apparently they had little in common.

The main tenet of Sufi thought as propounded by Ibn al-'Arabi is the concept of the oneness of existence (*wahdatul wujud*). Through this belief, Sufis think they are able to effect a merging of their souls with God's essence. That is, when God reveals his truth to an individual, that person realizes that there is no difference between God and the self. Ibn Taymiyya saw a link between the Sufi belief of *wahdatul wujud* and the philosophical concept of emanation. Although the philosopher would deny that a human soul could flow into, and thus be, the First Cause, the mystical experience of the Sufis took them beyond the realm of intellectual discourse. According to the mystic, a merging occurred but could not be expressed in rational terms. For Ibn Taymiyya, both the philosopher and the mystic were deluded, the former by reliance on a limited human intellect and the latter by excessive emotions.¹⁷

¹⁴ The theory of seven dignities is adapted from the teaching of Ibn Arabi, then firstly developed by Ibnu Fadlullah al-Burhanpuri in *Tuhfah al-Mursalah ila Ruh al-Nabi*.

It resembles to the concept of Platonism that: God, ideas, logos, the Divine spirit, angels, human kind, and matter.

¹⁵ The three first dignities are qadim and baqa; then the four rest dignities are muhdat.

In sum, it could be argued that tasawwuf has a world view that consider the reality is consisted of ontological hierarchy whereas world is one of the lowest of that level of hierarchy. In this view, God is considered as the highest source and the principal of all realities under Him. And all other things except God are defined as His creators or cosmos. However, the division between God and cosmos or Khaliq and makhluk do not characterized ontology but as a ma'quliyat(rational).

Through these, we could understand the present of correlative relation between God and His slave(*Hubb-Ilahi*, *Hubb-ruhani*, *Hubb-thabi'i* and *Hubb-'unshuri*). And this could be prove by *al-ittiba' li-rasulih* shallallahu alayhi wa sallam *fima syara'a*.

¹⁶ In one of his works he wrote:

"Before today, I used to criticize my companion if my religion was not the one which he followed. But my heart changed to accept every image, so pastures for the carefree lovers and convents for the monks. A house of idols and the idol house at Ta'if, the tablets of the Torah and the mushaf of the Qur'an. I follow the religion of love wherever it takes me, so all religion is my religion and belief. The above is an adaptation from lines of poetry from Ibn Arabi's work *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq* ("The Translator of Yearnings"). Its style is highly lyrical and meaning evidently metaphorical.

These lines are famous and debatable. Many people have associated these with Ibn Arabi's thought on his faith. The meaning of these lines would be -- and Allah knows best -- that one's involvement in worshipping Allah can experience a perception of Allah's embracing power and mercy such that one is no longer able to see any escape from true monotheist belief in Him even in ostensibly untrue, idolatrous aberrations. So one becomes overwhelmed by thanks and praise, "love," temporarily forgetting fear and repentance. This is an elated state of mind expressed poetically in very broad terms, not a creed.

Based on this poet, Nasr argues that Ibn Arabi came to realize that the divinely revealed paths lead to the same summit. However, Ibn Arabi is not a pluralist or transcendentalist. In *Dzakha'ir al-A'laq syarh Tarjuman al-Asywaq* Ibn Arabi states that religion of love refers to the religion of Prophet Muhammad PBUH. in Imran: 31, "say Muhammad, if you really love Allah, follow Me, thus I will love you."

(see: *Dzakha'ir al-A'laq syarh Tarjuman al-Asywaq*, ed. Muhammad Salim al-Unsi (Beirut, 1312 H)).

¹⁷ see *Fushus al-Hikam*, ed. A. al-'Afifi, Kairo: Dar Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, 1946, and A.E. Afifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyid Din Ibnul Arabi*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939.

Ibn Taymiyya's argument against the Sufis is on two levels. First, there is the theological position that God has attributes and that one of these attributes is God as creator. Ibn Taymiyya believed that the Qur'an firmly establishes that God is the one who created, originated and gave form to the universe. Thus there exists a distinction between God the creator and the created beings. This is an absolute distinction with no possibility of merging. He then went on to say that those who strip God of his attributes and deny that he is the creator are just one step away from falling into the belief of *wahdatul wujud*. This is the basis for the second part of his argument. Ibn Taymiyya believed that a Sufi is simply someone who is overcome by an outburst of emotion. For example, someone may deny God's attributes but could then be overwhelmed by a feeling of love for God. However, the basis of that person's knowledge is not the authentic information from the Qur'an, and so their weak intellectual foundation collapses with the onslaught of emotion. According to Ibn Taymiyya, sense perception and emotions cannot be trusted, and the likelihood of being led astray by them is compounded when one has a basis of knowledge which is itself errant and deviant. One holds a proper belief in God and maintains a proper relationship with him, Ibn Taymiyya argued, by establishing a foundation of knowledge based on the Qur'an and authentic *sunna*.¹⁸

It is also speculated that the concept of *wahdatul wujud* could be product of Arab interaction with Hindu mystics and literature, specifically in reference to the non-dualistic teachings of the Upanishads, which preaches very similar concepts in regards to reality being an illusion and the only true existence being Brahman.¹⁹ Furthermore, there are some other critics on *wahdatul wujud* of Ibn Arabi. They argue that *wahdatul wujud* is similar to pantheism.

WAHDATUL WUJUD AND PANTHEISM²⁰

The English word Pantheism means all is God that emphasizes that there is just a single being in existence and this single being is God. One of prominent sufis who always been associated with pantheism after Hallaj is Ibn Arabi. Ibn Arabi's works are confused a lot with Pantheist philosophy. That is why it is quite common to see even some Muslims attacking to his works by introducing him as a disbeliever to the world. In fact the ones who know his work will know that *Wahdatul Wujud* imputed to Ibn Arabi in his works, is nothing to do with Pantheism.²¹ We may argue that *wahdatul wujud* may be closer to panentheism, because it states that while the Universe is part of God or God's mind, God is still greater than his creation.²²

WAHDATUL WUJUD VS WAHDATUS SHUHUD

According to some Sufis, such an understanding of *tawhid* is the result of that stage or degree of union with God (*maqam al-jam*). But this is firstly a matter of *'irfan*, and then a matter of experience or tasting (*dhawq*). In this degree, attributing real existence to things could not but be contradictory to the Sufis' visions (*mushahadat*). That is why, to acknowledge *asbab* (causes) in that state would be, in a sense, to acknowledge an associate with God (i.e. to do *shirk*). On the other hand, to deny the *asbab* without really attaining such a degree of consciousness, without really experiencing it fully, is hypocrisy and a merely theoretical assertion. Therefore, one who denies union (*jam*) is considered *'irfan*-less (unknowing, unperceiving) and one who denies the difference between God and humankind (*farq*) which the Sufi overcomes in the experience of *jam* is considered far away from the secrets of servanthood to God. The mature person is one who comfortably accepts both *farq* and *jam*, each in its necessary place.

The second group comprises those who argue an absolute *wahdatul wujud*. For them Being is One, which is nothing other than God. The multiplicity of the visible is only imaginary or illusory. While *wahdatul wujud* is for the *sufiyya* a matter of affective state (*hal*) or direct experience (*dhawq*), the *mutasawwifa* seem to hold to it as an established conviction and philosophy.²³

As long as any believer in *wahdatul wujud* accepts his own answerability to God, his servanthood to God, it means that he is acknowledging the difference of *'amir* (the superior) and *ma'mur* (the subordinate). After acknowledging subordination, to insist literally on unity of *wujud* is sheer self-contradiction. And, bar a few unbelievers who reject servanthood, no believer has ever dared to reject servanthood to God. Therefore, whereas the understanding of *wahdatul wujud* of the *sufiyya*—which in reality concerns *wahdatul shuhud* (the unity or oneness of witnessing)—is a result of the affective state in Sufism, *istighraq* (absorption in ecstatic contemplation, beatitude), and of a lack of witnessing and phrases to express what they feel, the understanding of *wahdatul-wujud* of some of the *mutasawwifa* derives from the frailty and insufficiency of rendering in philosophical concepts and arguments what the Sufi experiences as inward consciousness and witnessing.²⁴

¹⁸ ibid

¹⁹ Retrieved from internet. Ibn Arabi and Sirhindi by Farzana Hassan-Shahid, June 2005, on 18 December 2009.

²⁰ See: al-Biqā'i, *Masra' al-Tashawwuf, aw, Tanbih al-Ghabi ila Takfir Ibn 'Arabi*, ed. 'Abd ar-Rahman al-Wakil (Bilbis: Dar al-Taqwa, 1989) dan al-Suyuthi, *Tanbih al-Ghabi fi Takhti'ati Ibn 'Arabi*, ed. 'Abd ar-Rahman Hasan Mahmud (Kairo: Maktabat al-Adab, 1990).

²¹ Retrieved from http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Arabi, on 18 December 2009.

²² The allegation should not be accepted that, under the influence of Neo-Platonist, some great Muslims sought to introduce a doctrine of "pantheism" into Islam. The most that could be said is that those Muslims may have considered it not dangerous temporarily to borrow some terms from the Neo-Platonist since they could not find the words they needed to express what they experienced in their *mushahadat* (visions) and perceptions. Otherwise, there is a world of difference between those two groups of people in terms of their understanding of the Divine Essence

²³ Retrieved from internet, Ibn Arabi in the eyes of the Great Mujaddid. Sufi Order of Pure Mujaddidi, Sufi Peace Mission. By Irshad Aslam, October 27, 2000, on 18 December 2009.

²⁴ ibid

For proponents of Tawhid Shuhudi or Wahdatul Shuhud, the perception of the one Being does not negate the existence of other beings as it does in Wahdatul Wujud. The Sufi in other words sees only One Being but is cognizant of the fact that there are other beings in existence as well. Wahdatul Shuhud does not necessitate the denial of the existence of other beings. Thus the seeing of one Being is a mere subjective observation of the Sufi. The defining feature of Wahdatul Shuhud is the recognition that God is above and beyond his creation and therefore transcendent, not immanent as he is in Wahdatul Wujud. God therefore is One Being who is distinct from his creations. He creates by the power of His words, not Ta'ayun as suggested by proponents of the doctrine of Wahdatul Wujud. The concept of wahdatul shuhud was given by Sirhindi.²⁵ He maintains that the world is not God but proceeds from God and has an existence independent of the Divine Being, but that it is only an illusory existence. In reality Sirhindi also asserts that there is only One Real Being who is God. The created world being imaginary is therefore not of the same Divine essence. In Sirhindi's view, the world is in essence non-existent and therefore unreal.²⁶

Perhaps, the distinctions between the doctrines of Wahdatul Wujud and Wahdatul Shuhud can be better understood through a discussion of the concepts of "fana" and "baqa". Fana and baqa are both stages in the mystical experience. "fana billah" is understood as merging with the Divine Essence or unification with God. Or the "existence of the self in God". This is the first stage in the mystical experience and only a stepping stone toward the ultimate goal of attaining "baqa billah" or "eternal life in union with God". When fana is experienced by the mystic, he forgets himself but when he reaches the stage of experiencing "baqa" he regains some of his individuality and therefore the distinction between him and the Divine again becomes apparent to him.²⁷

THE WAHDATUL WUJUD'S INFLUENCE IN ISLAMIC WORLD →INDONESIA

Ibn 'Arabi's writings have been very influential - chiefly among elites and Sufi tariqas. Although his name was widely recognized, only a minority of people could have read his works directly. But many of his ideas reached ordinary people through the Sufis, and through popular poetry. So far studies of Ibn 'Arabi's influence have been limited in scope to particular periods or regions, as any comprehensive study would need to take into account the intellectual history of Islam across the Muslim world.²⁸

In Persia, the teaching of Ibn Arabi was disseminated by Qutb Al Din Asy-Syaerazi. This sufis teaching was continued by Abd. Karim Al Jilli, one of principal of Shadziliyah tariqa and Jalaluddin Rumi. And in this time, the teaching of Ibn Arabi expanded into Nusantara.

THE PROMINENT FIGURE OF WAHDATUL WUJUD'S FOLLOWER

1. HAMZAH FANSURI

In the middle of the 16th century the most prominent Sufis who taught the doctrine of wujudiyah were Sheikh Hamzah al Fansuri and his disciple, Shamsuddin Al-Sumatrani or known as Shamsuddin Pasai. Sheikh Hamzah al-Fansuri, who was a leader of the Qadiriyyah Tariqa, played an important role in the spiritual life of the Aceh Kingdom until the end of the reign of Sultan Ala'uddin Ri'ayat Shah Sayyid al-Mukammil (1590-1604), whereas Shamsuddin Pasai began to gain influence in the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda. With the help of Sultan Iskandar Muda, the teaching of these two mystics spread beyond the island of Sumatra. Sheikh Hamzah al-Fansuri was directly influenced by Bayazid, Al-Hallaj, Attar, Junayd al-Baghdadi, Ibn 'Arabi, Rumi, Shabistari, Iraqi and Jami'. He wrote many books and poems, but a large part of them have been lost. Among his works are *Asrar Al-Arifin*, *Al Muntahi*, *Sharah Al-Asyiqin* or *Zinat al-Wahidin*, etc. The *Zinat al-Wahidin* is the summary of the doctrine of wahdatul wujud from works of Ibn 'Arabi, and also from Shadrudin al-Qunawi, Fakhrudin al-Iraqi and Abdul Karim al-Jilli.

²⁵The Great Mujaddid Ahmed Sirhindi, who lived in India about 1500 CE, is an eminent sufi commentator on Ibn Arabi. Although commonly regarded as a critique of Ibn Arabi, the Great Mujaddid instead held him in high esteem. He felt that the critiques (as well as many followers) have totally misinterpreted the writings of Ibn Arabi whom he respectfully called the Great Sheikh.

He wrote that Ibn Arabi's writings were the result of sufi mystic vision and have to be interpreted as such. Ibn Arabi's writings on the Unity of Being [wahdatul wujud] was his sufi mystic vision of the universe instead of being some 'set of creed' or 'theological doctrine' to which he came through a 'self-directed thought process.' Many people who criticize Ibn Arabi for his 'creed' being unIslamic are totally wrong as these are not his 'creed' but his 'sufi mystic experiences.'

Ahmad Sirhindi (*Mujaddid Alif Sani*), has criticized wahdatul wujud. Ahmad Sirhindi wrote about the sayings that universe has no existence of its own and is a shadow of the existence of the necessary being. He also wrote that one should discern the existence of universe from the absolute and that the absolute does not exist because of existence but because of his essence.

²⁶ However, if *salik* devoted himself in *muraqabat zikriyyah* until reaching *mukashafah* and *mushahadah* based on *ahwal* and *maqomat*, he would not feel any other existing except Allah. At this moment, *salik* does not feel anything except wujud Allah. This is also called as wahdatul wujud, but not in haqiqah. But merely on the wahdatul wujud of feeling, testimony, and senses.

Retrieved from internet. On 18 December 2009. What is "Unity of Being" (Wahdat al-Wujud)? Does it Conform in Any Way to the Teachings of Islam?" by Fathullah Gulen Monday, 26 December 2005.

²⁷ Wahdatul wujud is the suffistic expression that could not be achieved and understood transcendentally explained among by people. This concept could be told through tariqa that explain this step by step (maqamat) into dzauq→ sharia, tariqa, haqiqah→ makrifah.

²⁸ Furthermore, Ibn 'Arabi's impact outside the historic Muslim countries is not easily traced. Miguel Asin Palacios in the 1920s caused a furor when he suggested that Dante had drawn on Ibn 'Arabi's writings for his *Divine Comedy*. Orientalists began to study Ibn 'Arabi's works relatively late, and the first response was frequently frustration. The first work to be translated into English appeared in 1911. Recognition of the depth and richness of his writings has extended to new audiences over the past century, particularly since the 1970s. At the same time there has been a great revival of interest and publishing in the Islamic world.

Hamzah Fansuri explained the ontology of wujudiyah in his *Zinat Al-Wahidin*. He also presented this doctrine in Malayan poems or sha'ir.²⁹

According to him, the first epiphany, *Ta'aayun awwal*, includes four aspects, namely: 'ilm, wujud, shuhud and nur. *Ta'aayun awwal* is like an ocean without shore, and when it reveals itself, it is called the wave – that is when God sees Himself as "the known," and this is the second epiphany, *ta'ayyün tsani*, which is *ma'lum*, the object of knowledge, and called *a'yan tabitha*, or *suwar al-'ilmiyyah* or *haqiqat al-asyya* or *ruh idhafi*. The third epiphany, *ta'ayyün tsalist*, is *ruh*, the spirit in man and creature. The fourth and fifth epiphany, *ta'ayyün khamis* and *rabi'*, are the creation of the physics of the universe. All of this is inseparable from 'ilm, wujud, shuhud and nur since without these God cannot reveal Himself. The Essence is reflected in the world and therefore the world is not other than He (*la ghayruhu*). But he immediately said that God alone is Real, and the world is illusory or non-existent ('Adam) since "verily all that exists is annihilated except His Face (*wajhahu*)." (Sura 28:88).³⁰

Here, he considers God as the absolutely Almighty. In this perfectness, God entails all the things. For this, human being is considered by Fansuri as (a part of) God. His views on God and creation have been opposed by Nuruddin ar-Raniri. Hamzah Fansuri was considered as the preacher of pantheism. In fact, he mostly showed the concept of tashbih between God and His creation. However, he also has shown that there is tanzih between God and His creation.³¹

2. SHAMSUDDIN AS-SUMATRANI

He is a great scholar and prominent figure of tasawwuf from Aceh. He was Seikhul Islam in Aceh Kingdom in the time of Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607/1636). Hamzah Fansuri's disciple Shamsuddin Pasai developed his work a little different from that of his master, since although he was influenced by Ibn 'Arabi, he also took inspiration from works such as *Tuhfah al Mursalah ila Ruhi an-Nabi* by Ibn Fadhlil al Burhanpuri of India. The core of this teaching is that the universe, including man, was brought into existence by tajalli or the emanation of God: ahadiyyah, wahdah, wahidiyah, alam arwah, alam mitsal, alam ajsam and alam insan.³²

Sufi ulama who followed the teachings of *Wahdat al-Wujud* or the *Martabat Tujuh*. Among his kitabs are as follows; *Sharah Ruba'i Hamzah Fansuri*, *Tanbih al-Tullab*, *Anwar al-Daqa'iq*, *Kitab Mir'at al-Mu'minin*, *Kitab Mir'at al-Iman*, *Kitab Al-'Arifin* and *Mir'at Al-Qulub*.³³

Some of his thoughts are as follows: (1) God is the first wujud, the source of wujud and the only one of truth. (2) Dhat is the wujud of God. He is the perfectness of highest absoluteness, the thing that human being could not think about. That dhat is wujud and the source of all beings. And this wujud is similar to wujud of Allah. The wujud of Allah covers the seen and the unseen things. (3) The haqiqa of dhat and sifat 20 are considered one. Thus, dhat is sifat. (4) Allah's attributes are qadim and baqa. One the contrary, men attribute is fana. (5) The teaching of wujud is in the concept of mahabbah, and these are the way to God. (6) He interpret syahada as there is no my wujud except wujud Allah. (7) someone who has makrifah is the one who is understand tanzih and tashbih between God and his creation.³⁴

3. ABDUS SHAMAD AL-PALIMBANI

In Abd Shamad Al-Palimbani's work *Sairus Salikin*, he explains the teaching on God Divinity that first: God Divinity in Ushuludin is There is no God except Allah; second: I'tiqad 'awam; third Fana in tawhid is Allah the only One who exists; and fourth wahdatul wujud is the Universe is the material appearance of Allah. These three beliefs are considered as the true tawhid.³⁵

Based on the first teaching that there is no God except Allah, Al-Palimbani translates the explanation of Al-Ghazali regarding on the aqida of Ahl Sunna. He gives details the sifat wajib of Allah.³⁶ This teaching is considered as tawhid of lay people ('awam). Along with Al-Ghazali, Al-Palimbani does not consider God's *makrifah* (the direct seeing) would be impossible to be achieved; nevertheless He will be seen in the hereafter. And the God's *makrifah* could just be achieved by the nur (light) rewarded by Allah or known as Ilm Laduni. Such *makrifah* is equal to heaven of the earth. And this *makrifah* is regarded as the great level of tawhid.³⁷

²⁹ Such as *Sha'ir Burung Pingau*, *Burung Pungguk*, and *Perahu*.

Ade Armando in Hamzah Fansuri. *Ensiklopedia Islam*. V. 2. Jakarta. P.296-297.

³⁰ See M. Laily Mansur. *Kitab Ad-Durun Nafis*, Toko Buku Hasan, Banjarmasin, 1982.

³¹ Ade Armando in Hamzah Fansuri. *Ensiklopedia Islam*. V. 2. Jakarta: Ichtiar Baru-Van Hoeve. 1993. P.296-297.

³² Indeed, this teaching— which is called *maratabat tujuh* – is included in the 'School of Unicity', but its development is a little different and there is modification and influences from India because some Sufis in India, such as Sultan Akbar and Dara Sikuh, sought reconciliation with the Hindu doctrine and the Vedanta.

Ade Armando in Shamsuddin Al-Sumatrani. *Ensiklopedia Islam*. Vol. VI. . Jakarta: Ichtiar Baru-Van Hoeve. 1993. P.299.

³³ *ibid*

³⁴ *ibid*

³⁵ See Chatib Quzwain. *Mengenal Allah: Suatu Studi Mengenai Ajaran Tasawwuf* Sheikh Abd Shamad Al-Palimbani. Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1985.

³⁶ *Ibid* P. 38-39

The sifat wajib of Allah in Ahl Sunna's teaching contain the salbiya, the tanzih, the ma'ani, and the ma'nawiyah. These attributes are well-known as *sifat wajib 20*.

³⁷ *Ibid* P. 40

Then, for the second one that the statement of Fuqaha and Mutakallimun of Ash'ariya and Maturidiya on *Laa Ilaaha illallah*. The third and the fourth one are the goal of sufis. The third level of tawhid is the tawhid of muqarrabin. The sufis perceive the universe as the creation of God who manifests His wisdom and justice. However, such viewpoint is not adopted from the thought reflection of God and universe. But it merely achieve by a person who gains the emanation of God (nur al-Haq) through tariqa. And the fourth level of tawhid is the tawhid of shiddiqin. The sufi' inner consciousness is centered on God. He even does not perceive any other being or existence except the dhat of God. However in this level Al-Palimbani does not consider wujudiyah mulhid (close to pantheism) as the truth way, but he perceives wujudiyah muwahhidah as the truth way and the great level of tawhid.³⁸

4. MOHAMMAD NAFIS AL-BANJARI

In Kalimantan island, the cosmology doctrine and wahdat al wujud of Ibn 'Arabi adapted to local culture, and still survives until today. There are some Sufis who teach it, and the most popular book that explains wahdatul wujud is al-Durr al-Nafis by M. Nafis al-Banjari.

Syaikh Muhammad Nafis al-Banjari is an Indonesian eminent tasawwuf thinker. Muhammad nafis bin Idris Bin Husein Al-Banjari was born in Martapura, South Kalimantan. He is one of the heir of Banjar Kingdom. He played a significant role in the expansion of Banjar Kingdom, through his preaching. As a prominent scholar, he was bestowed a title as *Maulana al-'Allamah al-Fakhamah al-Mursyid ila Tariq as-Salamah*.

His tawhid conceptions contain sufistic nuance, different with kalam nuance from the thought of mutakallimin. This thought represents important contribution to Islam science discourse. Some of his book are *Kanz as-Sa'adah fi Bayan Istilahat as-sufiyyah* (a book that describe the terminologies of sufi) and his work, *al-Durr al-Nafis* (Beautiful Pearl) containing four main theme: wahdat al-af'al (unity of deed), wahdat asma (unity of name), wahdat sifat (unity of attribute), and wahdat dzat (unity of essence). His views about tawhid in sufistic nuance remain in shahadah's (testimonial) framework. Hence, he remains stick on the wahdatul shuhud idea, contrasted with wahdatul wujud.³⁹ He proposes the sunny Asy'ari tawhid then criticizes and opposes muktazilah and jabbariyah. Then, he developed the tauhid teaching of sufi and refuses the concept of hulul of Hallaj and ittihad of Abu Yazid Al-Bustami. He also bridge and reconcile the teaching of tasawwuf sunni and tasawwuf falasafi by combining wahdatus suhud and wahdatul wujud. In his book, Al-Banjari explains the concept of *tawhid af'al*, *tawhid asma*, *tawhid shifat*, and *tawhid dhat*.⁴⁰

5. RONNGOWARSITO⁴¹

The doctrine of wahdatul wujud, which was developed by Hamzah Fansuri and Shamsuddin Pasai, was also absorbed into Javanese mysticism, such as Serat Centhini⁴², Serat Tuhfah, Wirid Hidayat Jati etc. It predominated in Java until the 19th century, because many rulers of the kingdom supported it. Later some Javanese mystical literature – but not all, of course –tended to pantheism, and the doctrine of Unity as formulated by Hamzah Fansuri and Ibn 'Arabi became modified and aberrant from its original sources.

One of the prominent followers of wahdatul wujud in Java is R. Ng. Ronggowarsito. Ronggowarsito or Burham (1728 J/1802 M), is son of **RM. Ng. Pajangsworo**. As a son of noble, he has an adjutant (*emban*) Ki Tanujoyo, as his Mystic teacher. He grew as a poet, and wrote many *serat* (poems) based on his experience and the condition of his time. As an intellectual he wrote many thing on the field of life. ***Serat Wirid Hidayatjati*** is a poem which he had written that based on his thought of Tasawwuf. ***Serat Kalatidha*** is his social view. ***Serat Jaka Lodhang*** is his superiority in prediction or fortune telling. And ***Serat Sabda Jati*** is one of his works that predict his own death.⁴³

³⁸ The concepts of *al-Insan al-Kamil*, the perfect man and *Wahdat al-Wujud*, are both linked to the doctrine of *Tawhid* and thus in Sufi Islam *Tawhid* means, first, faith and belief in the unity of God; second, discipline of the internal and external life in the light of that faith; third, experience of union and oneness with God; and fourth, a theosophical or philosophical conception of reality in the light of the mystical experience. The first two senses are accepted by all Muslims. However the third and fourth senses are the particular teaching of Sufi Islam. For them Tawhid in the third sense is to have the perception of the One Being through mystical experience. It is the highest experience of the unity of God. In the fourth sense, one loses his own identity and becomes one with the One being. In this sector, though several formulations exist, the most elaborate and forceful formulation of the doctrine of *Tawhid wajudi* or *wahdatul Wujud* is from Ibn Al-Arabi.

³⁹ Al Banjari has tried to reconcile the tradition of Ghazali and Ibn Arabi. In this work, he used the teaching of his teachers and refers to "Futuhat Al-Makkiyah" and "Fushul-Hikam" from Ibn 'Arabi, "Hikam" (Ibn Atha'illah), "Insan Al-Kamil" (Al-Jilli), "Ihya' 'Ulumiddin" and "Minhaj Al-'Abidin (Al-Ghazali), "Risalat Al-Qusyairiyyah" (Al-Qusyairi), "Jawahir wa Al-Durar" (Al-Sya'rani), "Mukhtashar Al-Tuhfat al-Mursalah" ('Abdullah bin Ibrahim Al-Murghani), and "Manhat Al-Muhaammadiyah" by Al-Sammani.

Azyumardi Azra. *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII dan XVIII*, Mizan, Bandung, 1994

⁴⁰ See M. Laily Mansur. *Kitab Ad-Durun Nafis*, Toko Buku Hasanu, Banjarmasin, 1982.

⁴¹ He is the son of Mas Pajangswara and Grandson of [Yasadipura II](http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ranggawarsita), the great poet of [Surakarta](http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ranggawarsita) Kingdom. His father is the heir of Pajang Kingdom and his mother is the heir of Demak Kingdom.

Retrieved from <http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ranggawarsita> , on 18 December 2009.

⁴² The *Serat Centini*, as first shown by Soebardi (1971), contains more detailed information on the works studied in the "pesantren", but it would be rash to assume that this is valid for a period much earlier than that when the Centini was composed. In the discussions of its protagonists, twenty different kitab are mentioned, six of which are major fiqh texts (including the ones mentioned already, *Taqrib* and *Idah*. nine works on doctrine (including Samarqandi's introductory text and Sanusi's two well-known works on *'aqida* with various commentaries), two tafsir (the near-ubiquitous Jalalayn and that of Baydawi) and three works on sufism.

⁴³ These are some of Ronggowarsito's works: *Bambang Dwihashta* : cariyos Ringgit Purwa *Bausastra Kawi* atau *Kamus Kawi – Jawa*, beserta *C.F. Winter sr. Sajarah Pandhawa lan Korawa : miturut Mahabharata*, beserta *C.F. Winter sr. Sapta dharma Serat Aji Pamasa Serat Candrarini Serat Cemporet Serat Panitisastra Serat Pandji Jayeng Tila Suluk Saloka Jiwa Wirid Hidayat Jati Wirid Ma'lumat Jati Serat Sabda Jati*, etc

Ronggowarsito believes in Martabat tujuh or known as ilmu Laduni. According to him such knowledge is needed by ruler. Hence, the ruler does not need to perform any sharia' obligations. In *Serat Wirid Hidayatjati* he explains sufi's ways. And one of them is how to perform the *Penekung*, through arranging *nafas*, *anas*, *tanaffas*, and *nufus* and should not be mixed. He states that "*nafas*, *anas*, *tanaffas*, and *nufus* are collected in Bayt al- Makmur (head), then these would be recreated again becoming *nukat ghaib*."⁴⁴

Retrieved from http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rangga_Warsita on 18 December 2009.

⁴⁴ HAMKA. Perkembangan Kebatinan di Indonesia. Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1971. P: 37-40.